

With federal funding, the USDA allocated \$1.2 million to the WVDA to administer the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. This program provided vouchers to West Virginia seniors to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables from farmers' markets. This benefited both our senior citizens and farmers' markets, and we received many letters of thanks and gratitude from our seniors.

We are aggressively pursuing other grant opportunities in an attempt to provide new programs to our constituents and stretch state dollars even further. We will report our success in next year's annual report.

On the environmental front, we fused our environmental and regulatory activities to create the Regulatory and Environmental Affairs Division (READ). Minimizing agriculture's impact on West Virginia's water while promoting family farming and the rural way of life is a major concern of the WVDA. One way we have shown our commitment is by lending our expertise and support to the Chesapeake Bay Agreement.

These are only a few of the many issues and activities the WVDA is involved in on behalf of the citizens of West Virginia. In this annual report, you will find a division-by-division account of the range of our activities.

In my ninth term as Commissioner of Agriculture, I am proud to be at the helm of an agency responsible for not only protecting our state's animal, plant and human health, but also perpetuating and preserving the family farm and renewable resources, which remain an integral part of our state's economy.

Our appreciation goes to Governor Bob Wise, Senate President Earl Ray Tomblin, House Speaker Robert Kiss and members of the West Virginia Legislature for their steadfast support of agriculture and rural issues this past year. I look forward to continuing our work to strengthen West Virginia's economy and protect the many treasures of the Mountain State.